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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO. INFORMATION FROM
FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

CD NO.

COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF
INFORMATION

SUBJECT INDICATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL VULNERABILITIES

DATE DIST. 13 NOV 52

HOW
PUBLISHEDWHERE
PUBLISHED

NO. OF PAGES 11

DATE
PUBLISHEDSUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

LANGUAGE

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CFW Report No. 55 -- USSR

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MALENKOV'S SPEECH

at the

19th All-Union Congress of the Communist Party

6 October 1952.

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THE 19TH CONGRESS OF THE ALL-UNION COMMUNIST PARTY

In his 40,000-word speech to the 19th Party Congress on 5 October, Malenkov dwells at great length on the country's industrial and agricultural activities but devotes considerably closer attention to the Party and its functions. This is undoubtedly in keeping with the original announcements that one of the major items on the Congress agenda will be the reorganization of the Party structure. Malenkov's report, however, makes no reference to the impending changes beyond the familiar observation on the need for an all-round improvement in Party work. A preliminary discussion of the proposed revision of the Party Statute is contained in Khrushchev's speech of 13 October. Nor does Malenkov make any mention of the "preferential equality status" of the Great Russians in the USSR. That theme was prudently assigned to Lavrentiy Beria who is of non-Russian origin.

The Soviet consumer does not figure very prominently in Malenkov's long report. Consumer production and services are dealt with inferentially and mostly in the context of the broader economic and welfare aspects of the Soviet people. At one point, in fact, the speaker even emphasizes the necessity of subordinating living comfort and other daily amenities to the "common weal", that is production in general. Based on the 1940 production index, Malenkov's figures show that while the overall industrial output by 1952 has increased 2.23 times and the output of the means of production (that is heavy industry) 2.67 times, the increase in consumer production amounted to only 56%. Discussing some of the shortcomings involved in the merger of the collective farms, Malenkov pointed out that the trouble with that reorganization lay in "the wrong approach, from the consumer angle" (nepravilny potrebitelskiy podkhod) to the question of collective farm development. Agricultural and other high officials are in effect blamed for excessive consideration for the collective farmers as individual consumers:

The mistake of these comrades consists in the fact that they have forgotten the main production tasks of the collective farm and put the primary emphasis upon their derivative-utilitarian tasks, those concerning amenities on the collective farms. Amenities are no doubt important; they are still, however, secondary rather than primary tasks...

Russian version:

Oshibka etikh tovarishchei sostoit v tom, chto oni zabyli o glavnykh proizvodstvennykh zadachakh kolkhozov i vydvigali na perviy plan proizvodnie ot nikh potrebitelskie zadachi, zadachi bytovogo ustroystva v kolkhozakh. Zadachi bytovogo ustroystva imeyut, nesomnenno, vazhnoye znachenie, no oni yavlyayutsya vse zhe proizvodnymi, podchinennymi, a ne glavnymi...

An itemized partial list of consumer goods to be produced by the end of this year shows an expected 20% increase over 1940 in the output of leather footwear (250,000,000 pairs) and a 30% jump in the production of cotton fabrics (5 billion meters).

Industry: Soviet industry has been doing a good job, completing and even exceeding its plans from year to year, but the optimistic production indices, Malenkov hints, cannot always be taken at their face value. Concealed behind them is a certain amount of bad work (plokhaya rabota) of many enterprises which are lagging behind the plan. The tempo of mechanization of labor-consuming work in industrial enterprises, it is stated, is much slower than anticipated. A large number of plants have been only partially mechanized, and their potential output is therefore held down to a low level by the manual labor still being done in their unmechanized departments. As discussed in previous CFW reports, instances of "resistance" (soprotivleniye) to mechanization on the part of both management and workers have been reported from time to time from various industrial localities. The management, it appeared, was reluctant to have part of its qualified workers replaced by

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

STATINTL

the uncertain performance of untried machinery, while the workers understandably disliked the idea of becoming redundant and being shifted elsewhere as a result of the plant's mechanization. That this situation still prevails is evident from Malenkov's references to the repeated failures of the mechanization plan. Reiterated in this connection also is the hope that complete mechanization of industrial plants will release a number of workers needed for work elsewhere.

The mechanization of production at any undertaking must inevitably be accompanied by the release of a section of workers in order that the released workers may be used both for the expansion of production at the undertaking concerned or for work in new undertakings. Some heads of establishments, however, instead of insuring that the mechanization facilities are properly utilized and labor productivity raised accordingly, frequently organize work by old-fashioned methods, by the extensive use of manual labor.

Russian version:

Mekhanizatsia proizvodstva na lubom predpriatii dolzhna neizbezhno soprovozhdatsya vysvobozhdeniem chasti rabochikh s tem, chtoby osvoboddayushchikhsya rabochikh ispolzovat kak dlya rasshireniya proizvodstva na dannom predpriatii, tak i dlya raboty na novykh predpriatiakh. Mezhdru tem nekotorye rukovoditeli predpriatii, vmesto obespecheniya nadlezhashchego ispolzovaniya sredstv mekhanizatsii i povysheniya na etot schet proizvoditel'nosti truda neredko organizuyut rabotu po-starinke s shirokim primeneniem ruchnogo truda.

Some of the other industrial evils yet to be stamped out, according to Malenkov, are "padded estimates" (pripiski), artificially "reduced norms" (zanizhennye normy), and the so-called "statistical-experimental norms" (opytno-statisticheskie normy) -- all different methods of making a good showing and cheating the State at the same time. Despite the continuing Government drive to make the industrial plants utilize their "internal resources" (vnutrennie rezervy) to the full and thus lessen their reliance on State assistance, some of the Ministries manage to circumvent all regulations by submitting inflated requisitions for supplies, on the one hand, and concealing the potential output of the plants, on the other:

Many Ministries determine the capacity of an enterprise by using its "bottleneck" as a criterion; capacity estimates frequently include artificially reduced production norms...

Russian version:

Mnogie ministerstva opredelyayut moshchnosti predpriatii s ravneniem na "uzkie mesta" proizvodstva, pri raschete moshchnostei neredko primayut zanizhennye normy proizvoditel'nosti...

Top-heavy and inefficient administrative machinery, overhead expenditures and the production of defective goods, Malenkov asserts, produced a net loss to the State of 4.9 billion rubles in 1951 alone. The situation in the construction industry is still worse: the planned profits of 2.9 billion rubles had turned into a 2.5 billion ruble loss. (Taken by themselves, these figures are of course not indicative of anything since there is no way of determining what values they represent in terms of labor and materials). These and many of the other failings listed by Malenkov are of course not new. They have been broadcast with monotonous regularity from many kraia, oblasti and rayons of the USSR for a long period of time. The attention given them by the Congress of the All-Union Communist Party merely enhances their significance and highlights the basic weaknesses of the Soviet industry.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

STATINTL

- 3 -

Nepotism, dishonesty and abuse of official position for personal aggrandizement are familiarly discussed by Malenkov in the three major parts of his speech -- on industry, agriculture and Party affairs. His repeated references to the tight circles of officials who use the "krugovaya poruka" (literally, all-round mutual shielding) methods to cover a variety of malpractices are fairly indicative of the widespread corruption in every branch of Soviet life, and of the stupendous efforts required to eradicate it.

Agriculture: Although the 254,000 collective farms existing in 1950 have now been merged into 97,000 enlarged kolkhozes (ukrupnennye kolkhozy) and the total area under cultivation now exceeds the prewar level by 5,300,000 hectares, agricultural shortcomings are admittedly still numerous. The production of flax and vegetables in a number of oblasts has not yet reached the prewar level, according to Malenkov. He further states that "the total gross and marketable production" (valovaya i tovarnaya produktsia) of meat, milk, butter, eggs, wool and leather goods has exceeded the prewar level but familiarly omits any absolute figures in regard to the total volume or per-capita production of the above commodities. That they are still in short supply, however, may be gathered from the speaker's remark that

for the purpose of satisfying the growing needs of the population in livestock produce...it is necessary to bring about a further considerable upsurge in livestock breeding.

Russian text:

dlya udovletvoreniya rastushchikh potrebnostei naseleniya
v produktakh zhivotnovodstva...neobkhodimo osushchestvit
dalneishiy znashitel'nyy podyom zhivotnovodstva.

Here again the point is emphasized, inferentially, that much is yet to be done in agriculture before the consumer can adequately be taken care of. The shortage of meat and other animal products, it is implied, is the direct result of shortcomings in the broader aspects of agriculture, such as livestock-breeding, machine-tractor station performance and mismanagement in general, including the squandering of collective farm properties. A large part of the tractor pool at the MTS and State farms becomes prematurely unserviceable; there is an excessive consumption of fuel and lubricants; harvesting is not always completed on time, and large crop losses are incurred. The chief bottleneck of agriculture, however, is still the livestock industry: "many collective farms have a high cattle death-rate and a low standard of livestock productivity" (mnogie kolkhozy imeyut bolshoy padezh skota i nizkuyu produktivnost zhivotnovodstva).

Malenkov's virulent attack against repeated irregularities in agriculture is addressed to the Party and agricultural officials rather than to the farmers themselves. It must be admitted, he says, that squandering of collective farm property and other violations of the Kolkhoz Statute "are still frequent." The difficulty in fighting these crimes is evident from his intimation that Party officials and agricultural organizations whose duty it is "to safeguard socialist property" have themselves succumbed to the temptation of personal enrichment. Such people and organizations are henceforth to be considered as "enemies of the collective farm system" (vragi kolkhoznoy sistemy), and the "full severity of the Soviet laws" (so vsei strogotyu sovetskikh zakonov) must be brought to bear with a view to eliminating them from public life.

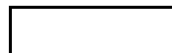
Of some interest in this connection is Malenkov's reference to the wrong agricultural policy previously maintained by high Party leaders. That policy called for the introduction of "detached teams" (obosoblennye zvenya) on the collective farms and the liquidation of the existing production brigades. (It will be recalled here that the problem of farm labor organization had for a long time been the object of violent controversy within the highest Party echelons when A. Andreyev of the Politburo first introduced and championed the detached-team system. It soon became apparent, however, that the farm team, consisting as it did of a handful of workers, was too small a unit to fit into the collective scheme of things. Andreyev subsequently lost his argument and the larger production brigades were reestablished, but some traces of his system still remain.) The steps taken to eliminate those errors and distortions, says Malenkov,

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STATINTL

- 4 -



have made it possible to considerably improve labor organization on the farms, but there are still "serious shortcomings in this respect." Many collective farms, it appears, have not yet gotten around to organizing permanent, fully-manned brigades and equipping them with the necessary farming machinery.

Another practice previously encouraged and now to be done away with is the production of building materials by the collective farms for their own collective needs. Collective farms have in recent years been encouraged to make better use of their so-called internal resources (vnutrennie rezervy) for the construction of farm-buildings, housing and cattle sheds. This has led to the establishment of "auxiliary enterprises" (podsobnie predpriatia) for the production of bricks, tile, lumber and other building materials. But these new enterprises soon revealed a tendency to expand, bite into the collective farm manpower and therefore keep agricultural production down. That the Party and the Government took a dim view of the new development has been evident from occasional radio and press references to the inability of the Ministry of the Building Materials Industry to cope with its tasks in the rural areas. Malenkov leaves no doubt now about the official attitude toward the mentioned industrial activities of the collective farms: the practice has proved a failure and must therefore be abolished. All the farmers hitherto engaged in non-agricultural activities must go back to the fields and concentrate on multi-production farming (mnogootraslevoye selskoye khozaistvo). As to the supply of building materials, the State, industry and local industrial cooperatives will have to expand their production and do the job at a lower cost.

Another step taken by the Party toward streamlining agricultural production, according to Malenkov, is the introduction of the "progressive system of income distribution" (progressivnaya sistema raspredelenia dokhodov) among individual farmers. Stripped of its Soviet euphemism, this means a more rigid control over the actual output of every field worker. Under this system the collective farmer is to be paid according to the number of labor-days he puts in "in direct conformity" (v pryamoy zavisimosti) with the actual amount of agricultural produce he turns out. This measure, says Malenkov, is designed to increase the farmers' efficiency and do away with the still prevailing system of "wage levelling" (uravnilovka) at the same time.

Malenkov's discussion of literature and art is merely a summation of all the criticism in that field heard on the regional transmitters, and is therefore largely familiar. Despite certain definite attainments in those branches of culture, he said, the ideological-artistic level of many works "still remains insufficiently high" (vse eshche ostayotsya nedostatochno vysokim). The major failure of Soviet art and literature is that they do not portray "Soviet reality" (sovetskaya deistvitelnost) as it actually is. They are yet to produce a true image of the "Soviet man...in all the magnificence of his human dignity." The motion picture industry is said to be particularly derelict in its duty of fostering in Soviet society habits and customs free from the "sores and vices" (yazvy i poroki) bred by capitalism. Branded as another serious shortcoming of art and literature is the avoidance of "contradictions and conflicts" (protivorechia i konflikty) which alone are capable of stimulating constructive criticism as an effective method of education. Satire is another asset which Soviet literature unfortunately lacks, for

it would be incorrect to think that our Soviet reality does not provide material for satirical treatment. We need Soviet Gogols and Shchedrins who with the fire of satire will exorcise everything negative, rotten and stagnant...

Russian version:

nepravilno bylo by dumat, chto nasha sovetskaya deistvitelnost ne dayot materiala dlya satiry. Nam nuzhny sovetskie Gogoli i Shchedriny, kotorye ognyom satiry vyzhigali by iz zhizni vse otritsatelnoy, prognivsheye, o mertvevsheye...

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

STATINTL

- 5 -

Artists and men of letters are at the same time cautioned against straying too far from the fold by leaving political considerations entirely out of their work. The idea of "typicalness" (tipichnost), it is claimed, has been widely misinterpreted by Soviet literatti. Painters, writers and artists must always bear in mind that what is typical is not only that which is encountered most often but also that which expresses the essence of a given social force with the greatest fullness and precision. The conscious exaggeration of the outlines of a particular image is therefore not necessarily atypical. Reduced to undialectical terminology, this seemingly abstruse peroration is merely another exhortation to writers, artists, playwrights and others to keep in step with the constant changes as determined by the Party, since "the problem of the typical is always a political problem" (problema tipichnosti est vseгда problema politicheskaya).

Malenkov's review of the social and State system of the USSR contains little that is new beyond his references to the Soviet State frontiers, seldom discussed on Soviet transmitters, and what might be construed as decentralization (razukrupnenie) of some of the Government administration. In the North-West, he said, we have new frontiers which are "more just and which more closely correspond to the interests of the country's defense" (boleze spravedlivie i boleze sootvetstvuyushchie interesam oborony strany). The reacquisition of Southern Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands is similarly "in complete conformity with the historically-formulated conditions" (naiboleze sootvetstvuyut istoricheski-slozhivshimsya usloviyam) for the development of the people of the Soviet Union.

The rapid postwar expansion of the State's functions brought about by the "great momentum of socialist construction" (bolshoy razvorot sotsialisticheskogo stroitelstva) has prompted a number of changes in the administrative-territorial organization of the State. Another and more plausible reason for these changes was the desire to facilitate and strengthen Party control over both the Government institutions and the national economy. New oblasts, okrugs and rayons have been formed and appropriate Party committees within them organized. The growth of the national economy, Malenkov asserts,

has demanded further alterations in the organizational form of State leadership of various branches of industry, agriculture and other branches of the national economy. This has found its reflection in the decentralization and formation of new central organs of State administration.

Russian version:

potreboval dalneishikh izmeneniy v organizatsionnykh formakh gosudarstvennogo rukovodstva razlichnymi otraslyami promyshlennosti, sel'skogo khozaistva i drugimi otraslyami narodnogo khozaistva. Eto nashlo svoje vyrazhenie v razukrupnenii i sozdanii novykh tsentralnykh organov gosudarstvennogo upravleniya.

PARTY AFFAIRS: Intraparty criticism and self-criticism, Party and State discipline, personnel administration and ideological activities are discussed at some length in Malenkov's report. Since the 18th Party Congress (1939), the Party membership has jumped from just under 2.5 million to almost 7 million people, including probationer members, by 1 October 1952. But this growth has not been without its growing pains--in this case an inordinate disproportion (nesootvetstvie) between the Party's numerical strength and its qualitative make-up. The Central Committee has therefore decided to reduce the admission of new members to the Party and concentrate on "raising the political and ideological" level of those already within its ranks. Although this measure was designed to completely eliminate the mentioned disproportion between numbers and quality, the effort does not appear to have been successful:

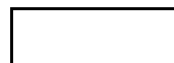
It is not to be assumed, however, that the task set by the Party--to liquidate the comparative backwardness in the political training of Communists in relation to the growth of the Party ranks--has already been solved.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

STATINTL

- 6 -



Russian version:

Odnako nelzya schitat, chto postavlennaya partiyey zadacha likvidirovat otstavanie urovnya politicheskoy podgotovki kommunistov ot rosta partiynykh ryadov uzhe reshena.

All the Party iniquities highlighted by the press and radio, it is intimated, are traceable to its swollen ranks and the poor ideological quality of the individual members. Admission to the Party will therefore continue to be limited until the situation is radically improved.

To think that criticism from below and self-criticism within the Party can develop "on its own and of its own accord" (sama po sebe, v poryadke samoteka) is idle speculation, since the known hostile reaction to critics, and instances of retaliation against them, would discourage anyone from opening his mouth. Driving home the point, Malenkov points out that the importance of honest criticism even transcends intraparty considerations, and its State-security angle should not be underestimated. Only insufficient attention to this important aspect of Party life can account for the "feeling of security" (nastroyenie bespechnosti) and "blunted vigilance" (prituplenie bditelnosti) revealed by some Party, Soviet and industrial officials. We must always bear in mind the continuing capitalist encirclement, Malenkov insists, and that the enemies of the Soviet Union are always attempting to use the "unstable elements" (neustoichivye elementy) of our society for their sordid aims by smuggling their agents into the country. There have been cases of "divulging Party and State secrets" (razglasheniye partiynoy i gosudarstvennoy tainy), he admitted.

Violation of Party and State discipline, a target of frequent radio criticism, is referred to as "one of the most dangerous and pernicious manifestations" (odnim iz naiboleye opasnykh i zlostnykh proyavleniy), involving as it does among other things, concealment of the truth about the actual state of affairs and the "doctoring up" (priukrashivanie) of output reports. Nor are such transgressions of discipline traceable to individual officials alone. Complicity between industry officials and Party organizations obviously makes it more difficult to deal effectively with fraudulent activities, and Malenkov admits as much by saying that

cases are also known where economists, with the connivance of Party organizations, knowingly submit inflated requisitions for raw materials and embellish output reports to conceal non-fulfillment of production plans... Quite a few workers forget that the enterprises entrusted to their supervision are State enterprises, and try to turn them into their private preserves...

Russian version:

izvestny takzhe fakty, kogda khozaistvenniki pri popustitelstve partiynykh organizatsiy predstavlyayut zavedomo zavysheennie zayavki na syrye i materialy, pri nevypolnenii proizvodstvennykh planov dopuskayut pripiski v otechetakh o vypuske produktsii... Poyavilos nemalo rabotnikov, kotorye zabvayut, chto poruchennye ikh popecheniu i rukovodstvu predpriatia yavlyayutsya gosudarstvennymi, i starayutsya prevratit ikh v svoyu votchinu...

Malenkov also inveighs against unnamed high Party and Government officials, of whom he says there are many, who still consider themselves above Party discipline. Such officials should be disabused of their notions, he insists, -- and the sooner the better -- since Party discipline is equally binding upon all Communists, big and small, and "there can be no extenuation for reasons their high office" (ne mozhet byt nikakikh skidok na ikh polozhenie). Another aspect of intraparty corruption that gets repeated mention is the practice of backing, promoting and appointing Party officials from considerations of personal friendship, kinship and acquaintance. This, it is stated, has led to the organization of "cliques of cronies bound by an obligation to shield one another" (semeika svoikh ludey svyazannykh krugovoy porukoy). The Ulyanovsk Party Organization is cited as a case in point. A large part of the Party and State machinery, from high oblast

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

STATINTL

- 7 -

officials down,

became demoralized, entered upon a course of embezzling State funds, pilfering, and petty thieving of State property.

Russian version:

moralno razlozhas, vstala na put kaznokratstva, rastaskivanie i razvorovyvaniya gosudarstvennogo dobra.

The ideological theme is discussed in familiar terms, and the tenor of Malenkov's criticism is, in fact, somewhat milder than the assorted strictures about ideological aberrations frequently heard on the Soviet regional transmitters. A significant point in his speech, however, is the indirect references to what may be construed as foreign radio propaganda. (As pointed out in a previous CPW report, the only warning against hostile anti-Soviet ideas from abroad was voiced at the Latvian Republican Party Congress. That part of the Congress proceedings, however, was not broadcast, but reference to it was made in Loginov's report from Riga carried by PRAVDA on 24 September). The predominance of Socialist ideology in the country, says Malenkov, should not blind anyone to the fact that remnants of bourgeois ideology and private-property psychology still survive:

These remnants do not die away of themselves; they are very tenacious and are capable of growth...

Russian version:

Eti pereshitki ne otmirayut sami soboyu, oni ochen zhivuchi, mogut rasti...

Foreign propaganda alone, it is hinted, would not be very effective had it not been for the "unstable elements" (neustoychivye elementy) within the Soviet society who offer fertile ground for "unhealthy sentiments" (nezdorovye nastroenia). Such elements are admittedly still in evidence in the Soviet Union for, as Malenkov indicates, they have not yet been finished off (nedobity) by the Party. That this double threat to the country's ideological stability is not to be underrated, may be inferred from the following observation made by the speaker in the context of Party vigilance:

Neither are we insured against the penetration into our country of alien opinions, ideas and feelings from abroad, from capitalist countries, or from within...from groups hostile to Soviet authority.

Russian version:

My ne zastrakhovany takzhe ot proniknovenia k nam chuzhdykh vzglyadov, idey i nastroeniy izvne, so storony kapitalisticheskikh gosudarstv, i iznutri...so storony vrazhdebnykh sovetskoy vlasti grupp.

Among the other ideological flaws said to have been exposed within the Party but not yet eliminated are caste-exclusiveness (kastovaya zamknutost), "liberalism," unconcern with ideological mistakes and distortions, and a variety of un-Marxian "views and conceptions" (tochki zrenia i kontseptsii).

A note on the new Communist Party Presidium:

Conspicuously missing from the list of the newly-elected 25-men Party Presidium are A.A. Andreyev and A.N. Kosygin, both full Politbureau members. Kosygin's name, however, appears on the list of candidates for Presidium membership. The Ukrainian SSR is represented on this new body by Melnikov and Korotchenko, Party boss and premier

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

STATINTL

- 8 -

respectively, and the Karelo-Finnish SSR by Kuusinen, Chairman of the Republic's Council of Ministers. None of the other Soviet Republics appears to have its representatives on the Presidium. Brezhnev, top Communist of Moldavian SSR, and Patolichev, of Belorussian SSR, are listed among the 11 candidates.

Seven of the 10 members of the new Party Secretariat are also Presidium members. The other three -- Brezhnev, Ignatov and Pegov -- are candidates for membership. Among the candidates, incidentally, is also Foreign Minister Vyshinsky.

Molotov's wife, Zhemchuzhina, has been dropped from the new list of candidates for membership in the Central Party Committee, while Marshals Timochenko and Budenny, full members of the previous Central Committee, have now been reduced to the ranks of candidates.

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